



# SIERRA CLUB

*Connecticut Chapter*  
*P.O. Box 270595*  
*West Hartford, Connecticut 06127*  
connecticut.sierraclub.org

## Testimony Before the Environment Committee March 14, 2022

Dear Environment Committee Chairs Cohen and Gresko, Vice-Chairs Slap and Palm, Ranking Members Harding and Miner, and distinguished members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Sierra Club and our more than 40,000 members and supporters in Connecticut, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on several bills before you today.

The Sierra Club is committed to defending everyone's right to a healthy world by tackling the serious challenges of a warming climate, unprecedented levels of pollution, the waste management crisis, biodiversity loss, and the dangers of toxics. The climate crisis, pollution, toxic chemicals, overharvesting, and loss of habitat are threatening the biodiversity of the state and our planet. Wild animals in captivity put undue strain on species already under the stress of extinction.

We must do much, much more than has been done to date to address these issues with real solutions.

### **HB 5293- AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF WILD OR EXOTIC ANIMALS IN TRAVELING ANIMAL ACTS**

Sierra Club Connecticut supports HB 5923 and applauds the committee for raising this bill to protect animals from exploitation and cruel treatment. If passed, Connecticut will join six other states (California, Hawaii, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Colorado) that have already banned or restricted the use of wild animals in traveling exhibitions and circuses. There are many animal-free shows that provide humane alternatives, while also providing jobs for talented performers. These shows are cruel to the animals, as they compromise animal welfare with the constant travel, prolonged confinement, and physical coercion. They are also unsafe, as there are numerous accounts of worker and trainer injury and even death.

We have some concerns about potential loopholes in the existing language and some recommendations to improve the bill that we hope you will consider. Our concerns are that the current definitions of the wild and exotic will not protect animals born in captivity. We are also concerned that this will hinder the efforts of legitimate wildlife educators.

We suggest changing the definition of wild and exotic animal in section (1), (c) (3).

**Current Language** "exotic or wild animal" includes any animal that is not domesticated, including, but not limited to, any Canidae, cetartiodactyla, crocodilian, elasmobranchii, Felidae, marsupialia, nonhuman primates, perissodactyla, pinnipedia, proboscidea, ratites, spheniscidae or Ursidae;

**Proposed Language:** "exotic or wild animal" includes animals from any of the following classifications, including hybrids with the following classifications, whether born in the



# SIERRA CLUB

**Connecticut Chapter**  
**P.O. Box 270595**  
**West Hartford, Connecticut 06127**  
[connecticut.sierraclub.org](http://connecticut.sierraclub.org)

wild or bred in captivity: canidae (except domestic dogs (*Canis familiaris*)),  
cetartiodactyla, crocodilia, edentata, elasmobranchii, felidae (except domestic cats (*Felis catus*)),  
hyaenidae, marsupialia, mustelidae, nonhuman primates, perissodactyla (except donkeys, horses, mules, and ponies), pinnipedia, proboscidea, procyonidae, ratites,  
spheniscidae, ursidae, varanidae, and viverridae.

This change will create no doubt as to what the bill's intent is and which animals it intends to protect. Wild and exotic animal acts in traveling circuses are both cruel and dangerous to both humans and animals. They should be a thing of the past.

Thank you for consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

Ann Gadwah, Advocacy and Outreach Organizer  
Sierra Club Connecticut